

What Am I Reaching For?

A Free Companion Worksheet from the Married but Feeling Alone Series

Companion Reflection: Part 5 - [When Distraction Becomes a Way of Avoiding Connection – September 28, 2026](#)

Understanding What Draws Our Attention Away

After a demanding day, we may look forward to watching television, checking a phone, reading, or enjoying a hobby. These activities can provide needed rest and enjoyment.

At other times, we may reach for a distraction when something feels uncomfortable. Perhaps a difficult conversation remains unresolved. Maybe we feel lonely but hesitate to ask for time together because we fear disappointment.

A distraction may offer temporary relief. Yet when it becomes our usual response whenever connection feels difficult, an important need or concern may remain unaddressed.

The activity itself does not tell us why we are choosing it. We may be seeking rest, enjoyment, relief from stress, or a way to avoid something we do not want to face.

This worksheet invites you to look beneath one familiar distraction, recognize what you may be needing, and consider a response that addresses that need more intentionally.

The purpose is not to eliminate activities you enjoy or expect yourself to be available to your spouse at every moment. Your need for rest and personal time matters, too.

A Scripture to Consider

“Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!” —Psalm 139:23

David invites God to examine what is happening within him. As you complete this exercise, ask God to help you recognize what draws your attention, what you may be feeling beneath the surface, and what deserves your care.

Part 1 Notice a Familiar Distraction

Think about an activity you frequently turn toward when you have free time or when you feel uncomfortable.

It might be scrolling through your phone, watching television, working, playing a game, completing household projects, or another activity that occupies your attention.

Choose one activity to examine. You do not need to decide in advance whether it is helpful or unhelpful.

An activity I frequently turn toward is:

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When am I most likely to choose this activity?

For example: after work, when the house becomes quiet, following a disagreement, when I feel lonely, or before going to bed.

What do I usually enjoy or appreciate about this activity?

How do I typically feel after spending time on it?

Part 2 Look Beneath the Activity

Think about a recent time when you chose this activity. Try to recall what was happening just before you began.

What had been happening during the day or immediately beforehand?

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What was I feeling before I turned toward the activity?

You might have felt tired, overwhelmed, bored, anxious, disappointed, lonely, frustrated, or content.

What was I hoping the activity would provide?

For example: rest, enjoyment, accomplishment, relief from stress, a break from difficult thoughts, or something to occupy my attention.

Was there anything I did not want to think about, feel, or address at that moment?

It is okay if the answer is no. Not every enjoyable activity is a form of avoidance.

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Part 3 Identify the Need Beneath the Distraction

Look back at your answers. Consider what you may have needed when you reached for the activity. You may recognize more than one need.

What I may have needed	What that need might have looked like
Rest	I needed a break from responsibilities or conversation.
Enjoyment	I wanted to do something relaxing or interesting.
Relief from stress	I wanted to settle down after a difficult day.
Connection	I wanted companionship but was uncertain how to ask for it.
Time to process	I needed space to understand my feelings before discussing them.
Help with an unresolved concern	Something was troubling me, and I did not know how to address it.
Something else	_____

Which need or needs seem most relevant to the moment I described?

Did the activity help meet that need? In what way?

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Was there a need or concern that remained after I finished the activity?

If something remained unresolved, what was it?

Sometimes an activity meets one need while leaving another unmet. Watching television may provide genuine rest while a difficult conversation remains unresolved. You do not need to choose between rest and connection in every situation. Recognizing both needs can help you consider how to care for them.

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Part 4 Consider a More Intentional Response

Return to the moment you described in Part 2. Now that you have considered what you were feeling and needing, think about how you might respond if a similar situation arises.

If my primary need is rest or enjoyment, how can I make room for it without unintentionally neglecting something important?

For example: I could tell my spouse that I need some quiet time and suggest a time when we can connect afterward.

If I am avoiding an uncomfortable feeling or unresolved concern, what might help me understand or address it?

For example: I could identify what I am feeling, write down what I want to communicate, or seek support before returning to a difficult conversation.

Part 4 Consider a More Intentional Response (continued)

If I want connection but hesitate to reach toward my spouse, what is one small way I could communicate that desire?

For example: "I've missed spending time with you. Would you like to sit together for a little while tonight?"

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What would help me decide whether this is an appropriate time to seek connection, take a break, or address a concern?

If conversations with your spouse regularly involve intimidation, threats, coercion, or other harmful behavior, avoiding an immediate discussion may be a reasonable protective response. You do not need to initiate a vulnerable conversation simply to complete this exercise.

What I Want to Carry Forward

One thing I learned about what I may be seeking when I turn toward a distraction is:

One way I would like to respond more intentionally to that need is:

My prayer as I consider this step:

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Explore the Companion Reflection

This worksheet can be completed on its own. For a deeper exploration of how screens and other distractions can affect emotional intimacy—and how we can make room for connection without neglecting our need for rest—read [When Distraction Becomes a Way of Avoiding Connection - October 6, 2026](#), part of the Married but Feeling Alone Reflection series.

You may complete this worksheet individually. If you choose to share your answers with your spouse, focus on explaining your own needs and experiences rather than criticizing how the other person spends time. The purpose is to become more intentional about your attention—not to establish rules for controlling one another's activities.